DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 848 HE 029 765

AUTHOR Levin, John S.
TITLE Presidential Succession and Organizational Change in the Community College. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.
PUB DATE Nov 96
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (21st, Memphis, TN, October 31 - November 3, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Change; Administrator Effectiveness; *Administrator Role; Case Studies; Change Agents; *College Presidents; *Community Colleges; Data Analysis; Higher Education; *Leadership; Leadership Qualities; Leadership Styles; *Organizational Change; Organizational Climate; Qualitative Research
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the perceived impact of the president on organizational change at five community colleges in one state, and is part of a multiple case study which is addressing organizational change in community colleges. The methodology for the study was based on the literature of organizational change which suggests four constructs: change in the organizational paradigm, where underlying assumptions of participants have changed; change in organizational mission and purpose; change in organizational culture; and change in functional processes such as organizational structures, managerial practices, technology, decision making, and communications. Data collection and analysis involved interviews with presidents, administrators, faculty, and support staff; questionnaires; group meetings; and documents. The study found that community college presidents were seen to "make a difference," with the greatest influence being perceived during periods of leadership succession. Organizational changes attributed to presidents are summarized in two tables: the first covers data obtained during interviews and the second summarizes data obtained from the questionnaires. (Contains 33 references.) (CH)

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Presidential Succession and Organizational Change in the Community College

John S. Levin

The University of Arizona

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(409) 845-0393

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held in Memphis, Tennessee, October 31 - November 3, 1996. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Abstract

This investigation is an examination of the perceived impact of the president on organizational change in five community colleges. I find that community college presidents are seen to have considerable influence upon organizational functioning and are viewed as primary agents of organizational change. Presidential succession explains much of this influence.

Presidential Succession and Organizational Change

in the Community College

The animated debates and discourse about higher education presidents, their influences and their connection to institutional functioning, have dimmed. Other concerns such as the formation of executive teams (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993), the complexity of leadership (Birnbaum, 1989), and collaborative governance (Schuster, Smith, Corak, & Yamada, 1994) have eclipsed the topic of the individual impact of presidents on the organization. Nonetheless, presidents continue to be hired, fired, and retired; their influence cannot be dismissed easily.

The work of Bensimon, Birnbaum, and Neumann on presidents (Bensimon, 1993; Birnbaum, 1989, 1992a; Neumann, 1990), while groundbreaking and foundational, falls short of satisfying the question of presidential impact on the organization on at least two counts. First, their work is not grounded in broad, constituent data. For example, Birnbaum (1989) uses faculty only in his examination of leadership succession. He does not survey, interview, or observe other college constituents, such as administrators, support staff, board members, or students. The second area where the work of Bensimon, Birnbaum, and Neumann (1993; 1989, 1992a; 1990) does not satisfy scholarly interest is in connecting leadership to institutional types, particularly the community college. In addressing institutional leadership, Bensimon, Birnbaum, and Neumann do not disaggregate data even when they do sample community colleges, and they do not treat the community college as a special category (or argue why it should not be a special category).

In my research on the community college, I conclude that presidents do "make a difference" (Birnbaum, 1989, p. 123), that they do have influence and impact upon institutional functioning. In earlier investigations, I note that the question of presidential influence depends upon data

sources (Levin, 1992), that the areas of influence are not those explored by Birnbaum (1989) but include institutional morale and the public image of the institution (1992). In a later investigation, I note the specific conditions and factors that contribute to presidential influence (Levin, 1995).

In taking this debate and discourse on higher education presidents a step further in this investigation, I examine the impact of the president on organizational change. I find in this present investigation that community college presidents are perceived to have considerable influence upon organizational functioning and are viewed as primary agents of organizational change. I conclude that presidential succession explains much of this phenomenon.

Birnbaum (1989) posits that if presidents are important contributors to institutional performance, then a change in institutional leadership should have measurable effects upon a university or college's performance. Quoting Pfeffer, he asserts that "'if one cannot observe differences when leaders change, then what does it matter who occupies the position or how they behave?'" (in Birnbaum, 1989, p. 126). He concludes that change in institutional functioning as a consequence of presidential action is rare. His conclusions are based upon examination of faculty perceptions of organizational culture during two periods--1968-1970 and 1980-1981. The analysis was applied to comprehensive colleges (N=19), private liberal arts colleges (N=29), and private, comprehensive colleges (N=23). Thus, sources were limited to faculty and to higher education institutions excluding community colleges (as well as research universities).

Through other works of Bensimon, Birnbaum, and Neumann, we have acquired insights on presidents which may apply to an understanding of the influence of presidents. Birnbaum (1992a) concedes that new presidents may enjoy higher ratings from faculty than old presidents. Indeed,

he notes that "perceptions of presidential effectiveness may be inversely related to term of office" (1992a, p. 2). Bensimon (1993) suggests that new presidents are distinctly different from old presidents in at least two regards. First, new presidents are more likely to act, affecting institutional life; and, second, new presidents have yet to have an image fully constructed by faculty who assess the actions and behaviors of presidents.

Neumann (1990), in examining presidential learning, implies that presidents may cease both in their learning and growth after their earliest years in office. The reason may be that presidents are "actively engaged in 'getting to know' their new contexts and roles...and once they pass the critical 'take charge' years...lessen in this urge to discover" (1990, p. 401).

Finally, Birnbaum (1992a) indicates that new presidents, with higher support from faculty than old presidents, lead institutions where their predecessors did not have high faculty support. Additionally, Birnbaum (1992a) proposes that there are numerous reasons why new presidents enjoy a high level of support from faculty. These include faculty representation in presidential selection, the desirability of change based upon previous dissatisfaction, and the perception that new presidents have attributes that remedy problems created by the previous president, that new presidents act quickly and signal a change in leadership. Other reasons for high support are that new presidents become involved in their new environments to understand them and are thus seen as responsive to others, and that there is less criticism or muted criticism of new presidents because of expectations and because of disruption to campus social and communication systems, making organized dissent difficult.

The above observations and conclusions suggest that new presidents do affect institutional life and potentially affect performance. They enjoy a high level of support from campus constituents; they take action and face fewer constraints than old presidents; and, they are viewed as agents of change. What is evident from these studies and examinations of college presidents is that presidential succession is certain to "make a difference" (Birnbaum, 1989, p. 123) to institutional functioning.

Leadership Succession

Hart (1991) cites Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) in reviewing leadership succession in schools. They note that succession is a "disruptive event [that] changes the line of communication, realigns relationships of power, affects decision making, and generally disturbs the equilibrium of normal activities" (in Hart, 1991, p. 88). While Hart (1991) acknowledges that leaders are shaped by their organizations over time, she notes that succession affects school performance. Primarily, early leader and follower interactions determine the leader's power over followers and serve to legitimate the leader's authority. During the succession period, relationships are formed and negotiated, expectations between parties are confirmed or disconfirmed, conflicts may be confronted and resolved, and new leaders are accommodated or not in their work role and in the new environment (Hart, 1991).

Studies of higher education presidents point in a similar direction and suggest that the period of presidential transition and the early phases of a new presidency are times when there is considerable potential for organizational change. Birnbaum (1992a) notes that "the new president is a fresh start" (p. 10) when campus expectations are high for change. Bensimon (1993) describes

the initial assumption of office by the four year college president as a dynamic period where change brought about by presidential action constitutes the norm. Presidents "make announcements, reorganize, fire and hire staff, initiate new programs and eliminate old ones, and establish interpersonal networks" (Bensimon, 1993, p. 639). In a British case study of organizational change, Glendon (1992) documents the dramatic change to organizational power structures and authority relations at the onset of leadership succession. Scholarship on leadership succession including Birnbaum's (1992b) more recent research is not consistent with the earlier view that presidents do not influence institutional functioning or that institutions "do not appear to change as their presidents are replaced" (Birnbaum, 1989, p. 123).

These inconsistencies are not new: the limitations of presidents and the constraints under which they work can be juxtaposed to their control over institutional life, as both views are amply displayed in the literature (Cohen & March, 1986; Dodds, 1962; Kauffman, 1980; Kerr & Gade, 1986; Mortimer & McConnell, 1978; Stoke, 1959). What about the influence of presidents in the community college? While some community college scholars ignore presidents and leaders altogether (McGrath & Spear, 1991), others explicitly equate leaders with institutional effectiveness (Roueche, Baker III, & Rose, 1989; Vaughan, 1986) or implicitly with ineffectiveness (Richardson, Fisk, & Okun, 1983). Vaughan (1986) interviews presidents to conclude that they are important to their institutions while Roueche, Baker III, and Rose (1989) assume before their investigation of transformational leadership that presidents are influential. More evidence than this is required to support the claim that community college presidents

influence institutional functioning. Furthermore, if presidents are influential then does leadership succession explain this influence?

Method

This investigation is part of a multiple case study which addresses organizational change in the community college. This phase of the study was conducted during the 1993/94 academic year and involved five community colleges in a single state. Site selection was based upon the advice of community college practitioners and the chief executive of the state agency responsible for community colleges, individuals who responded to my request for sites where I might examine organizational change. Advice was sought from a number of sources including a state meeting of student services personnel and meetings of community college administrators, as well as informal meetings with community college faculty and administrators. In all, five sites were suggested, all by more than one individual, and all five sites were used in this investigation.

Although research methods were qualitative and a purposive sampling approach was taken, the five institutions as a group possessed features which might permit generalizability to other sites. First, as a group, the colleges were representative in size and location of the broad spectrum of comprehensive community colleges. And the organizational structures and student populations of the colleges as a group were representative as well (Phillippe, 1995). The colleges included large, medium sized, and small institutions with student enrolments ranging from 3000 to 28,000. Institutions included urban, suburban, and rural colleges and institutions within a city with a population in excess of two million as well as within towns with populations below 50,000. Two

of the five colleges had substantial minority populations and three colleges were multi-campus operations, and the other two were multi-site.

Of most significance to this study is the presidency. All five of the suggested colleges were led by chief executive officers with three years or less experience in their current positions. All qualified as new chief executive officers according to Bensimon (1993). Four of the five had prior presidential experience at another institution. One of the presidents moved as president from one college to another college in the same district. Three presidents were recently employed out of state. Ages of this group ranged from the forties to the mid-sixties. Finally, two of the presidents were women; one of the male presidents was a visible minority, and one of the male presidents was a non-visible minority.

As this was a multiple case study using qualitative analysis, methods for capturing participant perceptions and for understanding deep patterns of institutional meanings followed the advice of Merriam (1988) and Yin (1989) for case study research and Burgess (1984) for field research. As qualitative research, the investigation used semi-structured interviews involving both individuals and groups, site observations and informal conversations, an open-ended survey questionnaire, and document analysis.

In all methods, I was guided by organizational change literature (Levy & Merry, 1986; March, 1981; Smith, 1982), particularly by an analytical construct of organizational change based upon Levy and Merry (1986). This construct categorizes four kinds of organizational change: (1) change to the organizational paradigm where underlying assumptions of participants about the organization have altered; (2) change to organizational mission and purposes, an alteration to the

rationale for existence of the organization; (3) change to organizational culture, seen largely in changes to beliefs, values, and norms which are espoused and enacted by organizational members; and, (4) changes in the functional processes of the organization, particularly in organizational structures, managerial practices, technology, decision making, and communications.

Institutional documents, which included 1992/93 and 1993/94 catalogs, student enrollment data, budget data, current promotional material, college newsletters, and personnel numbers from 1988/89 to 1992/93, were collected and examined for patterns and trends. I also collected state community college agency documents on enrollments, programming, and budgets. These documents were also examined for the presence of images and themes which could provide me with a picture or narrative about each institution. College mission statements and goals were analyzed thematically and rhetorically, to capture the issues, perspectives, and possible motivations of college constituents, particularly those in formal leadership roles who have responsibility for published missions and goals.

Over a six month period, I met with administrators, faculty, and support staff, as well as the chief executive officer, at each community college. I arranged to meet with at least three administrators at each institution, a group of four or more faculty, each person involved in a leadership role in the institution (e.g., department chair, chair of senate). I also met informally with faculty, administrators, and a small number of support staff at each college. Formal meetings involved either individual interviews or group interviews, both relying upon a semi-structured format, with data collected on the topics of institutional history, present issues, and organizational change.

I developed interview data into profiles on each college, and these noted the institutional characteristics, such as organizational structures and governance processes, prominent historical events, and current issues of each college from the perspective of organizational participants. Additionally, questionnaires were distributed to college personnel, and included the following: two board members, chief executive officer, two educational administrators, one other senior administrator, four faculty in leadership roles (e.g., department chairs), and two support staff in leadership roles (e.g., chair of staff association). Respondents were asked to identify changes, forces of change, and outcomes of change in fourteen categories (e.g., curriculum, personnel, finances, students, governance). Data from organizational members collected through interviews and questionnaires cover the period of 1993-94.

My interest was the ways in which community college participants interpreted organizational life, especially in their explanation of organizational change. I was looking as well for what Erickson (1986) refers to as causal links, the social construction of action where individuals and groups give meaning to behaviors. To guide analysis of data, I examined data from the construct of Levy and Merry (1986) noting references to organizational change with respect to organizational paradigm, organizational mission and purposes, organizational culture, and organizational processes. My analysis was particularly sensitive to what is referred to as organizational culture (Cameron & Ettington, 1988; Morgan, 1986; Schein, 1985) in that the investigation emphasizes the shared meanings of organizational members.

While data collection and analysis involved interviews, documents, and questionnaires, interview data, the responses of administrators and faculty, provided the most extensive data. During the interviews I was able to rely upon several factors and to use a variety of techniques to elicit considerable response at several levels. First, general rapport was established because of my background as a former community college practitioner. Second, the topic interested all parties and this interest was evident in both the willingness of all participants to talk and the quantity of data obtained from interviews. Third, initial questions, such as "describe the past of the college; give me a sense of college history", led to more specific questions through probes, such as "I want to know more about this point". In most interview situations, whether with an individual or group, interviews quickly evolved into conversations. Nonetheless, data from questionnaires and documents were compared with interview data. Document data provided quantitative information on students (i.e., demographics, enrollments), on institutional budgets (i.e., revenues, expenditures), and on employees (i.e., employment status).

Each president was interviewed alone for at least an hour, and I took extensive notes, frequently recording statements verbatim, especially when statements pertained to institutional change. The senior administrators (i.e., deans, vice presidents, campus heads) were interviewed as a group at each institution, with additional interviews of individual administrators who were unavailable for the group interview. Faculty were interviewed both alone and in groups, with some individual interviews occurring in faculty offices or on campus walkways. In these cases, conversational interviewing style was used, and notes from these conversations were recorded later in the day, from memory. All conversations and interviews were guided by the same

investigative format which asked what has changed or altered in the institution over the past five years, who or what was responsible for these changes, and what were the outcomes of the changes.

Data and Analysis: Organizational Changes Attributed to Presidents

Data from interviews with faculty and administrators are displayed in Table 1. The displayed data indicate those areas of significant change as noted by respondents, those areas where the president alone or in concert with others was viewed as responsible. Three categories are used to organize the data. These categories are consistent with the questions put to the faculty and administrators: What has changed? Who or what is responsible for change? What are the outcomes of change?

Data from questionnaires (from faculty, administrators, board members, and support staff) are displayed in Table 2. The displayed data indicate those areas of significant change noted by respondents where the president, either alone or in concert with others, is viewed as responsible. The categories used are the same in Table 2 as in Table 1.

Interview data were analyzed to identify patterns, that is the recurrence of items noted by respondents, and data were analyzed comparatively. Data from one party were compared with that from other parties to determine consistency. Thus, if there were recurrent references to the re-structuring of departments, then data from the president, from administrators, and from faculty were compared to determine if (a) the meanings of the action were consistent, (b) the determinants of the action were consistent, and (c) the outcomes of the action were consistent.

Table 1

Determinants of Organizational Change: Interviews

	What has changed?	Who/what responsible?	Outcomes?
College			
1.	administrative personnel	president and board	new administrative group
	focus on student development and learning	president and faculty	unknown
	power structures	president	perpetuation of competing interests
	introduced strategic planning	president	slow, deliberate change and constituent involvement
2.	re-structuring of departments	president	more bureaucratic, decentralized decision making, more formal operations, fewer depts and chairs (from 75 to 40)
	orientation of college to community, particularly organized groups and businesses	president	more corporate image of college, changing focus to external environment

	establishment of more professional and bureaucratic environment	president	improves image of college, depersonalizes and distances relationships
3.	governance	faculty and president	greater democracy
	morale	loss of former president and arrival of new president	faculty involvement
4.	involvement of employees in decision making	president	ambivalence
	quality improvement initiatives	president and senior administrators	unknown
5.	introduction of TQM to deal with shrinking resources	president	new ways of thinking, improved morale, pervasive use of TQM, reorganization
	programming and curriculum	president and administrators	improve enrollments and retention

Table 2

Determinants of Organizational Change: Questionnaires

	What has changed?	Who/what responsible?	Outcomes?
College			
1.	new administrative personnel and in-house promotions	president	frustration for administrators
	change in budget allocations	president	unknown
	creation of new decision making body	president	mixed: maintenance of status quo & improved governance and administration
	relationship with community: more reaching out	president	too soon to tell
	more emphasis on faculty involvement in community	president	improved community relations
2.	administrative stability	president	stabilization of operational systems
	evaluation of faculty and administration	president	more efficient organization--improvement and progress
	increased public relations; more credible institution;	president	community support; increased potential for more positive

	community involvement in college processes		environment
3.	more cooperative; more collegiality; increased productivity	president	more focus on students; better place to work; unity of purpose
	new administrators	president	improved morale
	new leadership philosophy	president	institutional renewal
	cooperation and collegiality in governance	president	unity of purpose
	state funding increased;	president	cooperation
	building staff development program & better state relations	president	bright future
	open budget process	president and v.p. finance	decline of admin costs and increased funding for instruction
	focus on community needs	president	no response
4.	more employee involvement in governance	new senior administrators	shared governance
	change from hierarchical to flatter admin; involvement of managers and faculty leaders in	new senior administrators	mixed responses: some people losing power

	decision making		
	employee involvement in decision making	president	employee confusion
	decrease in interaction with individuals in community	president and administrators	less interaction with community
	movement of money from special projects to core functions	president	broader understanding of resources and budget limits
5.	restructuring and reduction of administration; sharing of power	president	reduced structures and internal competition; more cooperation

Of the four areas of organizational change identified by Levy and Merry (1986), two--change to organizational processes and organizational culture--are suggested by the data in this investigation. Organizational processes are altered at one college (#2) by the re-structuring of academic departments, to the extent that the total number of departments decreased from approximately 75 to 40, with the removal of current department chairs, the revision of job descriptions, and the selection of new chairs. At another college (#4), organizational processes are altered by the increasing involvement and role of faculty and other employees in institutional decision making. Prior to this alteration, college employees had a limited role in governance processes, and the former college president controlled decision processes. With the increasing role of employees in decision making, faculty played a more prominent role in curriculum and program planning.

Both of these alterations were attributed to the presidents of the two institutions. Neither change was praised by faculty, whereas senior administrators noted that these actions were improvements to institutional operations and ultimately to outcomes. At the college where academic departments were re-structured, the college president began to "re-organize the college", "even before [his] first official day on the job". According to the president "the department chair position" was troubling to him, "since I arrived" at the college three years earlier. Senior administrators explained that the president "re-organized the college by de-centralizing decision making" and "he remedied the flawed organizational system of the past where faculty would run to the president and to the board". He was seen to restore sound bureaucratic leadership to the institution. Faculty noted that the college is now "more

professional" with "less centralization", and admitted that this was an improvement over the past when the college was "disorganized" and subject to a high level of internal politics and antagonisms. Both faculty and administrators concurred that "order" permeates the college. But faculty lamented their considerable distance from the governing board, and they depended upon the president for their well-being, including their working conditions.

At the college with an increased role for employees in decision making (#4), the president after a year in his position at the college noted that the faculty are "struggling" because they look to the president for decisions. Instead, the president refused to make decisions that required others' expertise. He instituted a strategic planning process to emphasize process and "collaborative, participatory decision making." One senior administrator noted that the faculty, as well as some other administrators and support staff, are "overwhelmed" with the imposed change of a new presidency. That is, the president was re-assigned from one college in a district to another, and his predecessor was moved to his college. Faculty noted that while their "comfort level has gone up", in the past there "was more freedom", noting that "individual deals" with the former president were the norm: "The past was OK if decisions went your way."

The president and his two senior administrators explained that they were attempting to emphasize process and procedures, to improve organizational performance, and to bring a more systematic approach to the management of the institution. The faculty acknowledged acceptance of these changes as long as they do not inhibit faculty from maintaining their values and goals, which include service to students, "student learning", and "the relationships between faculty and

student". "The common goal here is students", noted one faculty member. "We like it small; our students like it small", noted another. "Faculty reach out to students", said another.

Organizational culture, including the values held by organizational members and the meanings they attributed to organizational actions, is affected by changing relationships between organizational members at one college (#2), by alterations to the connections that faculty have to the institution (e.g., increasing their role in governance), at another college (#3), and by changing rationale for institutional action, in the case of a third college (#5).

The introduction of Total Quality Management (TQM) by the college president marked a significant change to the organization, according to both the college president and to college employees. While the college (#5) has a reputation as a "change agent", according to the president, faculty, and administrators, change in the past was directed to the external environment. According to organizational members, the introduction of TQM precipitated internal change, "empowering employees" and "involving everyone". TQM also led to a re-organization of the college.

The motivation of the president to adopt TQM strategies was to deal with shrinking resources and help the college survive as a responsive institution. However, once introduced, TQM became a pervasive way of operating, and what began as a strategy evolved into a philosophy. Initially, employees were antagonistic to TQM, and the president "backed off forcing it on everyone". Now, faculty and administrators asserted, TQM has been embraced to the extent that its assumption of continuous improvement is inserted into all organizational decision making deliberations in the college.

Overall, the data from respondents indicate that college presidents are identified as responsible for alteration to administration, particularly to personnel, roles, and goals, to college operations and emphases, to forms and processes of decision making, and to organizational goals and mission focus. Outcomes of presidential action are extensive and varied: perpetuation of competing interests within the institution, improvement of college image, de-personalizing of employee relationships, increased employee involvement in decision making, more attention to business community, to employees, and to students, and a new underlying philosophy about the rationale for college operations.

The role of the chief executive officers in initiating change was regarded as "central", "crucial", and "essential". The departure of a president and the subsequent arrival of a new president marked the ending of one phase of organizational life and the beginning of another. Organizational change accompanied presidential succession.

One college (#3) provides a salient example of the prominence accorded to the chief executive officer, largely as a consequence of succession. A faculty vote of non-confidence in the former president, as well as a faculty petition to the state board of governors, initiated the departure of that president. The presidency of the former president, lasting some eight years, concluded in the early 1990s to the relief of the majority of college members. This former president was described as an autocratic president who contributed to the college through facilities development (e.g., campus building and performing arts center). His principal legacy was present, however, in the expressions of bitterness about the past and the treatment of faculty ("the past was so bad"). The

arrival of a new president brought a sense of "hope", "relief", and fairly high expectations to the college.

At this college (#3), the departure of the former president and the arrival of the new president at the college ushered in a developmental period for the college, what faculty referred to as "the new democracy". An "institutional self-study" was in progress "in preparation for accreditation". The new president saw the process of self-study as a form of strategic planning, and the faculty viewed it as an "avenue of change" ("not an event but a process"). The new president might be seen as a symbol of hope at the college in contrast to the former president who was depicted as a symbol of despair. The "former president had a bad attitude", noted one mid-level administrator. The former president "beat the shit out of me", noted a long serving senior administrator. "Cynicism is being replaced by hope", commented an instructor. We have "a desire to move on", stated another.

Organizational change was manifest in increased faculty participation in governance and planning processes and in improved faculty and administration relationships. Additionally, the college was involved in a revision of mission and goals statements, a revision which was expected to reflect employee values, in contrast to former statements which were not constructed out of a collaborative process.

Institutional changes effected by presidents alone or by presidents in concert with others are largely at the macro-organizational level, and with few exceptions they pertain to the management of the institution. These changes include the introduction of a strategic planning process to the

institution, re-structuring of departments, alterations to governance, and the introduction of quality improvement processes.

The consequences of these changes, with few exceptions, have more to do with influencing employee behaviors than with more measurable outcomes such as institutional productivity, student enrollments, or even student learning. Outcomes include the formation of new groups, increasing formalization of institutional roles and processes, increased sense of democracy, and improved morale. These outcomes suggest that institutional changes influenced by presidents affect internal constituents' behaviors and attitudes as well as organizational processes.

Finally, the interview data relevant to the presidents can be seen in an over-arching theme. This theme is comprised of the images of past and present, old and new, and former and current. These images are consistently embodied in the presidency: the articulated problems of the past are associated with the former president or presidents; and what is referred to at one college as the "new democracy", at another as "new ways of thinking", and at another as "a corporate approach" is connected to the new president. This suggests that perceived institutional change is a function of presidential succession, that the president as a new chief executive officer in the college was seen to act in ways and with effects that were neither practiced nor realized by the former president.

Conclusion and Implications

Community college presidents are seen to "make a difference" to institutional functioning. Leadership succession helps to explain much of this influence. Presidential succession is a significant contributor to perceived organizational change in the community college, specifically in

the areas of organizational processes and organizational culture. Succession in this study, particularly in the face of a conclusion to a less than satisfactory presidency, constitutes a drama with a happy ending. This can be regarded as a comedic phase of institutional life where there is both the promise of hope for change, to restore the organization to its ideal state, or to better the organization so that it finally achieves its ideal state. Like a Shakespearean comedy, not only is there a sense of new life emerging with a new leader but also there is the vanquishing of the past and its scapegoat, the former leader.

Practitioners who are not presidents should take note. Presidents do come and go, but their arrival and their early years in office signal considerable perceived alteration to the organization. For example, established communication networks are certain to change when new administrative personnel are brought into the institution and existing power structures are subject to alteration when new presidents effect changes to governance processes and organizational structure.

Presidents too might reflect upon their actions. They assume an office which has the expectation for the newly arrived to effect institutional change, and the phenomenon of succession itself precipitates change. But it is likely that the potential to influence the organization and to effect change diminishes with time. Furthermore, when presidents are replaced, perceived institutional changes that follow from their actions may be condemned and then reversed. Presidential legacies, once presidents are out of office, may not be those which presidents expect while in office.

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